

Young People's Societies

THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL.

Topic for Sunday, July 18: Pilgrim's Progress Series. VII.
The Palace Beautiful. Ephesians 4:7-16; 6:10-17.

Daily Readings.

Monday: Lions in the way. Daniel 6:16-23; Psalms 91:13.
Tuesday: In good company. Colossians 4:2-6.
Wednesday: How to overcome the flesh. Hebrews 12:1-3.
Thursday: The peace chamber. Isaiah 26:1-4.
Friday: Divine provision. Matthew 22:1-14.
Saturday: Armor for the fray. 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

From the summit of the Hill Difficulty the Pilgrim Christian came in but a little while to the Palace Beautiful, whose bounty and grace was a rich treat to his soul. Immediately after our severest trials God often gives us the sweetest realization of His love.

But even between the Hill and the Palace he must needs have a trial of his faith. There were lions in the way. Their fierceness affrighted him. But he was cheered on. The direction was given him to keep carefully in the middle of the road. This he did, and found that the lions were chained on either side and could not harm him there. Mistrust and Timorous need not have been alarmed nor have alarmed Christian.

The Palace Beautiful proved a place of sweet Christian communion, discourse and fellowship. Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity were the faithful entertainers and guides. In their wise converse Christian gained new strength and courage. They heard and reheard his experiences, they read the record of others' faithfulness and success. They inspected the beauties of the place, and gave Christian a distant view of the Delectable Mountains.

Christian was armed here for his further journey. There is strength in companionship and study of others' experience. Especially is there blessing in discourse about the Lord. The theme is too little used by his people, and that despite the rich promise attached to it. "That they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

From this Palace, and its Chamber of Peace, too, he looked out towards the sunrising. Inspiration and hope were given him, needed blessings in view of the valleys into which he would directly descend. The words of Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity made hope spring in his breast and fitted him to brave the dangers just before him. The armor with which he was clad when he went forth fitly came from their hands. God had a way to prepare his people for all comforts and conflicts. Their sojourn in the home of wisdom and charity will bring them peace and provision.

Conversation and thoughts of Christ and his good, and singing and recounting his deeds of grace to ourselves and others will thrust out evil associations and temptations. Too much time can not be given to study of the Lord. Too much attention can not be paid to the lesson, learned at his feet, of how to be so familiar with him that it will never be unnatural or difficult to talk of his love. Our losing the burden at the Cross, our ascent of the Hill Difficulty, our escape from the gaping jaws of the lions in our pathway should be daily themes for rejoicing and praise.

Stand like a knight in armor
When sin allureth thee;
One error makes life less fruitful
And glorious than it should be.
For the knowledge of sin is deadly,
And leaves in the soul a stain;
A bird with a broken pinion
Never soars as high again.

Prayer Meeting

THE KINGDOM THAT SHALL SAN DFOR- EVER.

Dan. 2:44,45.

Week Beginning July 11.

It is a perennial source of comfort and confidence that our Redeemer's Kingdom is indestructible and eternal. Many times and through many long periods, the "little flock" has been tempted to become alarmed for its safety; the guardians of the Sacred Oracles and institutions have trembled for the ark, but in marvelous ways and through terrible ordeals the Kingdom over which our Lord rules has been preserved in its integrity and in its power over the transitory affairs of men.

There is scarcely a human institution of formidable resource that has not assailed this kingdom with deadly malice and with desperate determination to overthrow it, but the Kingdom, under the command of Him who rules over it, and true to the imperishable principles on which it is founded, has witnessed the fall of its most relentless and powerful adversaries, while itself, bearing unfaltering testimony to truth and hoping in its God, has given evidence of a vitality which can not be accounted for by any theory of merely human sagacity or endurance. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

The native hostility of man to the holy light and the devoted life of the spiritual kingdom would warrant the presumption of the world-wide rejection of its unwelcome principles and requirements. The carnal mind—and all minds are by nature carnal—is enmity against God. It is not subject to his law. Yet the minds that have diffused the clearest, sweetest light into civilization have belonged to our Redeemer's Kingdom and have declared that whatever blessings they have conferred upon the world have been the fruits of his grace. A kingdom whose administration can transform hostile aliens into willing and devoted subjects, can supplant harsh judgments with loyal convictions and the bitter fruits of unbelief with the placable (?) fruits of righteousness, must have in it a vitality and a potency that is far more than human.

As we witness the advance of worldliness, the attractive guises in which it appears, the new forms in which its old enticements present themselves, their endless variety and ceaseless persistency, we are alarmed lest the beauties of Christian character be obscured and the chaste institutions of Christian service be overwhelmed with the floods of ungodliness. Such would inevitably be the case were the human agencies employed the sole guarantee of survival, but he that is for us is more than all that are against us.

The Kingdom of Christ is indestructible because the sovereign God, the Mediator of the new covenant, is its head. "Wherefore seeing we have a kingdom that can not be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." "Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy domining endureth throughout all generations."

AVOIDING "OPEN DOORS."

A sure way to fail is to accept every opportunity for doing good. "The duty of refusing to do good" has been pointed out in these columns and elsewhere many a time; yet we all need to be reminded of it. There is more that needs to be done, close to every man, than any one man can do; and one who attempts to do it all only lessens his usefulness for the things to which God would really have him devote himself. Ministers and laymen who are active in the affairs of the world and of the kingdom must bear this in mind if they would render their best service to God and man. Not every "open door" is to be entered. A certain amount of "side issues" increases a man's efficiency for his chief work to be sure; but the moment his chief work is being hampered by his attention to that which is apart from it, he must choose between the two. And there need never be any doubt as to one's duty; God will always make that plain.